The Bondage of Space and Time

Visitor – I remember reading somewhere that it is the combination of time and space which makes one remain in bondage. I have since been wondering how exactly time and space could make for bondage.

Shri M. – Let us be clear about what we are talking about. What do you mean by 'bondage' and bondage for whom? If you are satisfied with this world which you consider as real and the way it has been treating you, where is the bondage for you?

Visitor – Let me confess that the world seems real enough, but it is not a fact that I am satisfied with my role in it. I feel deeply convinced that there must be very much more to life than going through it as most of us do – without any definite aim – even if life were full of pleasures, which it certainly is not. From this point of view, I think life itself is bondage.

Shri M. – When you use the word 'I', what exact image do you have about yourself. When you were a child, you considered yourself a child and were happy enough to play with toys; then you were a young man with strength enough in your arms to tackle a couple of elephants, and you thought you could face anything or anyone in this world; you are now in your middle age, a little mellower, but nonetheless enjoying life and its pleasures, and you think you are a happy successful man, blessed with a good family but nevertheless an image about yourself that is quite different from the earlier images of yourself. Imagine yourself 10 years later and 20 years later, and the image you will have about yourself will be different

from the earlier ones. Which one is really 'you'? Have you thought about it? Is there any particular image that you can call your very own which has remained true and faithful? Is there anything in the whole wide world that you call your own ~~that~~ which has remained with you, unchanged and unchangeable?

Visitor – Now that you mention it I admit that I have had no particular idea about myself when I use the word 'I', and I agree that whatever idea I had about myself has been changing over the years. ~~and~~

Shri M. ~~Well, there is something which has not changed over the yet although I cannot point out at any thing as such I do ~~nothing~~ feel that there is something the constant sense that you are. This sense of feeling I AM has ~~not~~ changed. It is your constant ~~companion~~ image.~~ ~~period when everything else has been changing, and that is~~ ~~unchanging and steady~~ which I call 'I'

~~Shri M.~~ – ~~I~~ You are sitting in front of me. You KNOW that beyond doubt. Similarly, you know that you ARE, that you EXIST. In the absence of what, would you be unable to sense your existence?

Visitor – If I were unconscious, I would not know that I exist.

Shri M. – ~~Let us proceed further.~~ Good. The very first moment when you wake up, and your consciousness takes over, do you ~~too~~ not feel your presence, your existence – I AM – not as an individual person but just PRESENCE, as such?

Visitor – Yes, that is exactly right. I would say that my individual personality comes into existence when thereafter I see my body and other objects around.

Shri M. – When you say that you see an object, what really happens is that your senses have reacted to a ~~stimulation~~ stimulus from an outside source (that is, external to ~~the~~ your body apparatus); and what your senses have perceived and your mind has interpreted is an appearance in your consciousness; this appearance in consciousness is construed as an event extended in time and duration. It is, therefore, clear that all manifestation depends on a combination of two closely knit media

called Space and Time. In other words, in the absence of the Space-Time combination, no manifestation could possibly arise in consciousness. Are you following this?

Visitor - Yes, I can understand that. But where do I come in as an individual in this process.

Shri M. - This is exactly where the rub lies. All existence is a continual process of objectifying. We only exist as one another's objects and, as such, only in the consciousness that cognises us. When objectifying ceases, as in deep sleep, the objective universe has also disappeared.

So long as one imagines oneself as a separate personality, see the total picture of one cannot grasp the impersonal reality. And the idea of a separate personality is due to the illusion of time and space, which have no independent existence: they are only an instrument to make manifestation possible.

At any one time, only one thought or feeling or perception can be reflected in consciousness, but your thoughts, feelings and perceptions exist in succession and give the illusion of having duration. Is it not simply because of memory - identifying the present with the past and projecting it into future - that the personality comes into being?

Think of yourself as momentary, without past or future, and where is the personality? Actually try this and find out for yourself. In memory and anticipation, that is, past and future, there is a clear feeling that it is a mental state under observation, whereas IN THE ACTUAL, THE FEELING IS PRIMARILY OF BEING AWAKE AND PRESENT - HERE AND NOW.

Visitor: I think I understand. I must sit quietly and try to absorb this wholly new way of thinking.

Shri M. - Now do you see how Space and time block

come along with consciousness in order to make manifestation possible, are the culprits. All you can really say is: I AM (meaning WHAT-IS-IS); the moment 'I' there is a thought of 'Me' as a personality, there is bondage. To realise that is the end of all seeking. You arrive at it when you appreciate that whatever you think yourself to be is only based on memory and imagination (past and present), and stand aloof in pure awareness of the false as false.